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READ BEFORE THE MEETING OF THE MONTREAL MEDICO-
CEIRURGICAL SOCIETY, OCT. 23RD, 1891.

BY THE RETIRING PRESIDENT, DR. FRANCIS J. SHEPHERD.

Gentlemen,—I must first heartily thank you for the great consideration you have extended to me during my occupancy of the presidential chair of this Society. I know that I have often erred on the side of strictness in my rulings, and may at times have irritated some of you. This course of action I did not pursue from any personal motive, but in what I considered the best interests of the Society. I have also, during the year, endeavoured to be punctual in commencing work, and when it was commenced, to continue it to the end, without letting side issues obscure and obstruct it. Under the mild rule of my distinguished successor, Dr. Buller, you will regain your equanimity, and by his careful and skilful steering will be guided into quieter havens, and there feed on the scientific food so richly provided for you.

The year just expired has been an eventful one for this Society and for medical science at large,—an eventful one for this Society for several reasons. First, because it had been marked by the advent amongst us of a goodly number of our French brethren, who, with that spirit for which they are so famous, preferred joining an already established English-speaking Society, in which the proceedings were carried on in, to them, a foreign tongue, to establishing a society of their own. This step on their part is the proper one, and emphasizes the fact that in the republic of science, and medical science particularly, there is no distinction of nationality, language or creed. Such unions with our brethren will greatly tend to break down the barriers which it would be foolish to deny have been raised up between us, and make us proud to be called by the common name of Canadians. A second reason which makes this a memorable year is a most melancholy one. On no less than four occasions has it been our sad duty to pass resolutions recording our esteem and respect for members deceased. Two of these had been honoured with

the highest post it is in your power to bestow—the presidential chair—and all had done good and honest work for the Society, as the records will attest.

The first to leave us was *Edward Henry Trenholme*. For years he was an active member, reading numerous papers and entering into all the discussions. He graduated in 1862 from McGill University, and soon established himself in successful practice. He was a man of ability and great surgical daring, of no small amount of originality in the department of gynaecology, which he made his special study. He contested with Battey the priority of the operation of removal of the ovaries for the cure of the more chronic forms of diseases of these organs, and in many other ways made himself known to the profession abroad as a pioneer in certain departments of gynaecology. He had his faults, but all must concede that he was devoted to his profession and did what he could to further its advancement.

The next member for whom we had to mourn was a much younger man, but one whose performance was already considerable, and who gave high promise of the accomplishment of greater things in the future. All who knew *Richard Lea MacDonnell* as intimately as the speaker could not help loving him. Those in trouble could wish for no kinder friend, and the good deeds he did were not proclaimed from the housetops. He was the soul of honour, and could not, if he had tried, have done a dishonourable act. In the young men commencing practice he was especially interested, and was at all times their friend. The students who were so fortunate as to be under his charge could not help feeling his influence for good, for he inspired all with a high sense of their duties in the profession they had chosen. Dr. MacDonnell graduated in 1876, and after a year abroad became connected with the teaching staff of McGill University. He at the time of his death had earned a solid reputation as a careful, exact, and skilful teacher of clinical medicine. He read many papers of great value before this Society, and when present took part in the discussions, to which he always added much interest. He was the first to draw attention to the absence of the patellar reflex in diphtheria, and his paper on the symptoms of *Tracheal*

Tugging in Aortic Aneurism, since its publication in the *London Lancet* last winter, has attracted much attention. His paper on *Typhoid Fever*, read before this Society over a year ago, was a good sample of his honest, painstaking, and accurate work. At the time of his death he was engaged in writing an important section of a new work in the *Practice of Medicine*, edited by Prof. Pepper. If there were more Richard MacDonnells in the profession, both its tone and general status would be much higher than at present. A strong man has gone from amongst us whose memory will long survive, and whose influence will long be felt.

Soon after Dr. MacDonnell's death we had to assemble again for the purpose of offering our tribute to the memory of *Thomas Anderson Rodger*, who was cut down in the prime of his manhood when he apparently had many years of good work still before him. He graduated from McGill University in 1869, and was soon engaged in a large and lucrative practice. He was a man of action, and had many devoted friends, his geniality, bonhomie and heartiness involuntarily attracting many to him. As a practitioner he was most successful, being endowed with a huge amount of common sense and tact, which, united with good abilities, ensured his success. As surgeon-in-chief of the Grand Trunk Railway, he was known from one end of the country to the other, and was welcomed heartily wherever he went. He some years ago occupied the presidential chair, and at the time of his death held the honoured position of a member of the Medical Council of Quebec. No one will be more missed from among us, and no one will be more difficult to replace than Tom Rodger.

The last member whose death I have to notice is *Robert Godfrey*, who graduated in 1844 from McGill University. Dr. Godfrey belonged to a generation earlier than that known to most of you. He was one of the most honoured general practitioners in Montreal, and his kindly sympathetic manner, shrewd worldly wisdom and great experience made him a valued friend and counsellor. Dr. Godfrey for many years was connected with the Montreal General Hospital, and had acquired a considerable reputation in plastic surgery, for which he had peculiar

aptitudes. At the time of his death he had retired from practice with a well-earned competence, having more than accomplished the allotted three-score and ten years, to which it is the fortune of so few of us to attain. Dr. Godfrey also has filled the presidential chair, and has done good work in connection with this Society. He rests from his labours.

The past year has been an eventful one also on account of the large amount of excellent work brought before us in the shape of rare and interesting cases, numerous pathological specimens, and instructive papers. One striking feature of the year was the increase in the number of the younger members who contributed to the proceedings, and this notwithstanding the fact that some of them had formed a society distinct from this, in which, I am informed, good work is being done.

Our contributions to pathology have been especially prolific and valuable. No less than twenty-two members have brought before us one or more pathological specimens. Drs. Armstrong and Johnston head the list with no less than eight contributions each; next come Drs. Alloway, James Bell and the President with six each; Dr. Laphorn Smith with five; Dr. Roddick with four, and Dr. MacDonnell with three. Specimens were also shown by Drs. James Stewart, Geo. Ross, H. D. Hamilton, Finley, Reddy, Hutchinson, McConnell, Gurd, Hingston, Reed, Springle, Molson, Wm. Gardner, and Tunstall of Kamloops, B.C. I shall not attempt to enumerate the various specimens contributed, but from the names mentioned it will be seen that they cover every department of medicine and surgery. Another feature has been the exhibition of patients the subjects of rare interesting diseases and operations. These were shown by Dr. Jas. Stewart, Dr. Molson, Dr. Jas. Bell, Dr. England, Dr. Gurd and the President. Papers and reports of cases were read by Drs. Richard MacDonnell, England, Allen, Kenneth Cameron, Jas. Bell, Springle, Johnston, Hutchinson, O'Connor, Alloway, Laphorn Smith, McKechnie, Geo. Brown, Ruttan, G. T. Ross, Wesley Mills, James Stewart, McConnell, Buller, Lockhart, Armstrong and Blackader. In fact, no less than thirty-two members of this Society have, during the past year, done some-

thing to forward its work and increase its usefulness. This certainly speaks well for the vitality of the Association. We have had many papers of more than usual interest and value ; among them I might mention Dr. Stewart's paper on *Epilepsy*, Dr. Ruttan's paper on a *New Method for Estimating Acetone in Urine*, Dr. Blackader's on *Infants Foods*, Dr. Johnston's on *Bacteriological Examination in Cases of Diphtheria*, Dr. G. T. Ross's on *The Study of Koch's Treatment of Tuberculosis in Berlin*, and other papers of interest were contributed by Drs. Armstrong, Lockhart, Buller, McConnell, Mills, Geo. Brown, James Bell, Laphorn Smith, and McKechnie.

The average attendance was large (28.2), and at some meetings over forty were present. This shows that the interest in the Society is increasing, and that the profession in general are becoming aware of the educational and other advantages derived from regular attendance at the meetings. The attendance of the younger members has of late been very large, and I hope that every year will see an increase in their numbers, and especially of those who contribute to the proceedings. All that is needed is to begin, for it is the first step that costs. Every man who sees cases and observes them must have something to tell, and he also must occasionally see some cases that puzzle him and on which more light needs to be thrown. What better method is there than bringing such before this Society, keeping in mind the old proverb that "in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom."

The debates on papers read have often been very poor and barren, and it would be well if the Society could improve itself in this respect. If the members would read up the subject of the paper before coming to the meeting they might often get up interesting debates ; indeed many who would have much to say in private about the paper become shy and dumb in public. The only thing is to always endeavour to say something about the paper, if it is in your line of work, and say what you have to say shortly and clearly ; but you should know what you want to say before getting up, and should not improvise as you go along. You will say, however, that the object of the President's address

is not to give unasked for advice, so I shall stop before I have gone too far and proceed to discuss matters less personal.

The past year has been an eventful one to medical science in general, because it will always be associated with the name of Koch and his discovery of a remedy which he called tuberculin, and which he hoped would solve the problem of the cure of tuberculosis. The discovery of no other remedy ever raised such high hopes which were condemned to be so bitterly disappointed. The general public went mad on the subject, and they were aided by members of the profession. It is not a year since this potent remedy was made known, prematurely, it is said, and against the wish of its great discoverer. The world was soon startled with accounts of its marvellous properties, which read like a fairy tale. These accounts, however, were too good to be true. They were received with suspicion by the more cautious and thoughtful members of the profession, but the majority read and believed. Well, like other remedies, tuberculin has had its rise, decline and fall, the only difference being that it rose higher and had to fall further. The history of this remedy is familiar to you all, how the lay press was full of its marvellous performances, how those sick unto death were made well, and how it was confidently hoped that now one of the greatest scourges of the human race was laid low, that other discoveries would follow, and if perpetual youth could not be bestowed upon us, yet almost perpetual life would be our portion. The medical press, though not so extravagant in its promises, still felt the surrounding elation. The whole world became excited, and towards Berlin commenced a pilgrimage greater, perhaps, than ever took place to Mecca, and with much less satisfactory results. Many universities and societies sent ambassadors, or perhaps I should call them disciples, to learn wisdom at the feet of the great Bacteriologist. Others waited for more light; they were the wiser, for in nearly every case the pilgrimage gave no results and no good purpose was accomplished. This good city of Montreal was also stricken with the madness, though only to a slight degree, and although no members of our Society were sent as ambassadors, still two of our more enterprising confrères went out to see the

"reed shaken by the wind," on their own responsibility. When they returned, they gave us graphic and interesting papers concerning what they had seen abroad. In the meantime some of the wonderful fluid had been procured here, and was made use of in the hospitals, but no such results as we had read of were ever seen, in fact the remedy did much more harm than good, and soon it ceased to be employed. The stage of disenchantment and even vituperation has now come, and the great name of Koch has gained no fresh laurels as yet from his discovery of tuberculin. Some of the more sanguine minds hope with Lauder Brunton that "Koch's tuberculin may yet fulfil the hopes of its able and single-minded originator." It is possible that, deprived of its dangerous elements, it may yet be of service in the treatment of tuberculosis. At any rate, a new line of research has been opened up, and discoveries of great importance may yet await the patient investigator of infective diseases and their germs.

Gentlemen, when I commenced this address I had no intention of saying so much, but, like all poor sermons, length is a distinguishing feature, and it is much harder to be terse than discursive. Before I close I should like to express my appreciation of the services of one to whom we are all indebted for the great success of last year's work. I allude to our late secretary, Dr. McCarthy. Without him I should have been like a ship without a rudder. His foresight, discretion and diligence have made the position of President a comparatively easy one, and his published reports are a credit not only to himself but to the Society.

Gentlemen, again I thank you all for the kind manner you have borne with me, and I shall gladly retire into the back benches once more, from the obscurity of which, perhaps, it were wiser that I had never emerged.